27. (new) A phase change optical recording medium according to Claim 1, further comprising a first interface layer disposed between the first protective layer and the recording layer, wherein the first interface layer comprises an oxide of zirconium and at least one oxide of an element, excluding zirconium, selected from the group consisting of elements of period numbers 3 to 6 and group numbers 2 to 14 of the periodic table of the elements.

28. (new) A phase change optical recording medium according to Claim 1, wherein the oxide of zirconium has the formula Zr_xO_y, and x and y are integers.

29. (new) A phase change optical recording medium according to Claim 1, wherein the oxide of zirconium has the formula Zr_xO_y, and x is less than or equal to y.

30. (new) A phase change optical recording medium according to Claim 29, wherein x is 1 or 2.

REMARKS

Claims 1-26 were pending. Claims 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, and 12 have been amended. Claims 27-30 have been added. Claims 1-30 are pending. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the original and other claims in this and other applications.

Claims 1-7 and 10-26 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,296,915 to Yusu et al. Applicants respectfully traverse, and request reconsideration of the rejection.

Claim 1 as amended recites, *inter alia*, an optical recording medium having a substrate, a first protective layer, a recording layer, a second protective layer, and a reflective layer. A second interface layer is disposed between the recording layer and the second protective layer. The second interface layer comprises a solid solution of a partially stabilized or stabilized oxide of zirconium.

Yusu et al. discloses an optical recording medium in which interference layer 4b corresponds to the second interface layer of claim 1 of the present application. Interface layer 4b of Yusu et al. does not contain zirconium. See col. 6, lines 1-28. Thus, claim 1 is not anticipated by Yusu et al.

Nonaka et al. teaches boundary layers containing partial oxides of zirconium. The Examiner contends that these boundary layers correspond to the second interface layer of the present invention. Nonaka et al. does not disclose, however, that the boundary layers contain solid solutions, nor does it disclose that the boundary layers contain partially stabilized or stabilized oxides of zirconium, as recited in amended claim 1. Applicants note further that the descriptions of boundary layer materials in col. 6 et seq. do not include zirconium, and do not include mixtures or solid solutions. In addition, none of the examples, including Examples 38 and 39, utilize a mixture of oxides. Further, with respect to dependent claim 6 in particular, Applicants note that the partial oxides disclosed by Nonaka et al. do not anticipate ZrO_2 as recited. With respect to claim 14, Applicants note that Nonaka et al. teaches away from the use of sulfides. See col. 7, lines 33-43.

Hirotsune et al. discloses an optical recording medium that includes two adjacent protection layers: first protection layer 2 and second protection layer 3. These protection layers are located between the substrate 1 and the recording layer 5. The layers 2, 3 do not correspond to the second protective layer recited in amended claim 1. Indeed, the optical recording medium disclosed by Hirotsune et al. does not disclose a second protective layer as recited in amended claim 1. Intermediate layer 5 of Hirotsune et al. corresponds to the second interface layer of claim 1 of the present application. Intermediate layer 5 is formed adjacent recording layer 4 and first reflection layer 6. Hirotsune et al. does not disclose a layer corresponding to the claimed second protective layer of claim 1. Accordingly, Hirotsune et al. does not anticipate claim 1.

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

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